

WABASH RIVER HERITAGE CORRIDOR COMMISSION

Meeting minutes-May 14, 2003

Thrall's Opera House-Posey County

New Harmony, Indiana

Members present:

DNR-Steve Morris
Fountain County-Ron Howard
Gibson County-Sherrell Marginet
Miami County-Ken Einselen
Posey County-Tom Straw
Sullivan County-John Gettinger
Tippecanoe County-Norman (Lucky)
Neiburger
Vigo County-Keith Ruble
Warren County-Louise Jewell

Voting members not represented:

Carroll County
Jay County

Non-voting members not present:

DOC-Tourism
IDEM
DNR Historic Preservation/Archeology
INDOT

Proxies:

Adams County- Lucky Neiburger
Allen County- Lucky Neiburger
Cass County-Lucky Neiburger
Huntington County-Lucky Neiburger
Knox County-Steve Morris
Parke County- Lucky Neiburger
Vermillion County-Lucky Neiburger
Wabash County- Lucky Neiburger
Wells County-Mike Mettler (not present)

Commission and DNR staff present:

Susan Benner-WRHCC Exec. Director
Cynthia Webb-DNR

Others present:

Rory Robinson-National Park Service
Dan Goen-Master of Str. Lady Grace
Wayne Crouch
Velmar Howard
Don Jewell
Bill Davis

CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

Norman (Lucky) Neiburger called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm. All attendees present introduced themselves.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MARCH 12, 2003 MEETING MINUTES

Minutes were approved as written.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Lucky Neiburger reported the Commission has been appropriated \$100,000 for each of the next two years from the legislature. Lucky thanked everyone who helped in lobbying the legislators. Lucky mentioned that Senator Weatherwax and Representative Klinker were instrumental in securing the appropriation for the Commission. He heard Senator Meeks also supported the appropriation. Keith Ruble suggested sending letters to the legislators thanking them for their help.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Susan Benner, Executive Director, reported the Commission offered a letter of support to Merom Conference Center for their grant application for the Kodak American Greenway Grant.

Susan reported the Upper Wabash River Basin Commission did not get the IDEM 205 (j) grant.

The WRHCC has been awarded a grant from Hoosier Riverwatch, and anyone wanting to do the water quality monitoring will need to attend a free workshop.

Susan went to the Wabash Watershed Alliance meeting in Ohio and she was mentioned in an article in their local newspaper.

The WRHCC had a booth for Earth Day at Purdue University. The WRHCC also had a booth for Earth Day at Sullivan Lake. At this event, an interesting suggestion was made to issue a Wabash River Certificate for individuals who have walked all of the trails along the river.

Susan gave a presentation at the Banks of the Wabash Annual Meeting about progress with the Corridor Management Plan.

Susan reported the park board in Universal, Vermillion County is looking for assistance in the establishment of a park in Universal.

On National Trails Day, June 7th, there is an event in Lafayette called Celebrate the Wildcat. Susan sent out e-mail message to those in Tippecanoe County who might be interested in holding a canoe event on the Wabash River June 7th. She has not received any interest yet.

Susan contacted Jerry Hay, the St. Joseph River Basin Commission, and Friends of White River about putting together an Indiana River Conference. The St. Joseph River Basin seems interested but Susan still hasn't heard back from the Friends of White River or Jerry Hay.

David Dale, an artisan in Muncie, is coordinating paintings of the 19 counties within the Wabash River corridor and plans to sell the paintings and give part of the proceeds to the Commission. Emily Kress, Director of Outdoor Recreation, and Susan are going to visit his studio in June.

COMMISSION FINANCIAL REPORT

Susan Benner, Executive Director, passed out spreadsheets showing the budget, expenditures to date, and proposed expenditures. Proposed expenditures include: postage, office supplies, printing, office utilities, cell phone bill, and registration fees for the International Heritage Development Conference. Proposed expenditures total \$928.04.

The spreadsheet shows \$1,205.94 available after deducting proposed expenditures and previously approved expenditures. Susan said if these funds are not spent by the end of June, they will revert back to the state general fund. Tom Straw suggested these funds be used towards office expenses such as: postage, printer cartridges, and paper.

Steve Morris explained that the funds for Susan's contract had been encumbered in spite of some problems. The encumbrance involved transfer of funds from one spending category to another. Until the transfer was completed, a hold was put on other Commission expenditures. On Monday, May 12th, the situation had been straightened out.

Ron Howard said he was very uncomfortable with having to transfer funds before being able to use them. Steve Morris assured the Commission that the appropriation for the next biennium was worded so that such transfers will not be necessary.

COMMITTEE REPORT

Education

Teach the Wabash

Teach the Wabash was held April 11th. There were 34 people who attended. Among the attendees was a reporter from the local newspaper in Huntington, a speaker from the Miami Tribe, and a representative from Hoosier Riverwatch.

Legislative Initiative

A suggestion was made to plan events to reach out to legislators along the Wabash River Corridor. Rory Robinson will work with a committee on this project. He suggested having something to propose to the Commission in September. It was also suggested to plan events by dividing the Wabash River Corridor into three sections, the Northern part, the Central part and the Southern part.

Water Trail

Susan reported Banks of the Wabash receiving a CINergy grant in the amount of \$1,000.00 for water trail signs. She also applied to Subaru/Isuzu Automotive (SIA) and to Lilly Labs. Susan contacted the Arrow Head and Four Rivers RC & D, which are non-profit organization we can work with on this project. Susan is also applying to IPALCO for a Golden Eagle grant.

Susan handed out an estimate sheet for 15 water trail signs. The estimates are from a company called Folia. The total estimate for 15 signs and pedestals is \$10,075.00. There are approximately 37 access points along the Wabash River. The company sent a sample of the material they use in the signs. The material is called imbedded fiber-glass. Rory Robinson will check with other companies on their prices.

Historic Interpretation-Community Signs

Susan has not received as estimate yet for the rectangular shaped community signs.

BREAK

OLD BUSINESS

Corridor Management Plan

Rory Robinson distributed copies of the rough draft of the Corridor Management Plan to members of the Commission. Rory would like the members to review it and edit it. Rory explained that the vision plan is on page 4. The pages 12-19 are done except Rory will be putting pictures in later. By the September meeting he hopes to have the final draft and be ready for public review in October. The Resource Manual is being expanded, Rory is putting information on grants programs into it. Susan is to send copies to the members that were not present.

Officer Elections

In the March meeting, Lucky Neiburger appointed a nominating committee: Janet Fawley, Marianna Weinzapfel and Steve Morris. Steve Morris reported the nominating committee did not complete its work and requested an extension until the July meeting. Another suggestion was for the Commission to go ahead and elect the officers without a nominating committee. At this time Steve took time to read the proxies he had received. After this a discussion about a quorum ensued. It was decided the commission would proceed as though proxies count toward a quorum, but seek a legal opinion about this matter. Tom Straw made a motion to suspend the elections until the next meeting. John Gettinger seconded the motion. Motion passed.

NEW BUSINESS

Letters sent/Letters received

Susan sent Thank You letters to Representative Sheila Klinker and Senator Thomas Weatherwax for their assistance in helping the Commission receive an appropriation within the state budget. Susan received a letter of appreciation for the Thank You letter sent to Representative Sheila Klinker.

Susan sent Thank You letters to the speakers, hosts and lunch sponsors who helped with the Teach the Wabash.

Susan sent a Get Well card to Senator Weatherwax and received a Thank You letter in return.

Susan received a letter from Representative Clyde Kersey who wrote back in response to an e-mail written to him asking for support of the WRHCC in the state budget.

Susan received a Thank You from Partnership for Turtle Creek for our participation in the Earth Day at the Lake at Sullivan County Park and Lake.

Other Items

Keith Ruble made a motion to publish a WRHCC newsletter more often and send to commission members, legislators, and people important to the cause of the Commission. John Gettinger seconded the motion. Tom Straw asked that the motion be amended to establish a committee to look into the format, timing, cost, and distribution of such a newsletter. Ken Einselen seconded the amendment. Amendment passed. Motion passed.

Ron Howard suggested a newsletter be made for the central region, one for the northern region and a newsletter for the southern region. The newsletter committee members include: Keith Ruble as chair-person, Tom Straw, John Gettinger, Louise Jewell.

Susan passed out a questionnaire and asked the commissioners to fill out and return to her. The questionnaire is designed to help identify possible local Wabash River corridor projects and potential funding mechanisms.

Ken Einselen made a motion to approve the list of expenditures totaling \$928.04. Tom Straw seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Tom Straw made a motion that the additional remaining funds of \$1205.94 be spent on consumable supplies. Steve Morris seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Ron Howard made a motion to set up a finance committee, he is uncomfortable with the way the finances are done. Tom Straw seconded the motion. Motion passed. Finance committee members include: Ron Howard, Lucky Neiburger, Susan Benner, and Steve Morris.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

John Gettinger invited everyone to attend the Merom Bluff Chautauqua on June 6, 7, 8, 2003. John made pamphlets available to anyone who wanted one.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Comments by Visitors

Dan Goen of the White & Wabash River Steam Navigation Company showed a 15-minute video presentation entitled Life on the Mississippi.

Final Comments

Tom Straw thanked everyone for coming. Keith Ruble thanked Tom Straw for the tour of New Harmony. He regretted that more people did not attend, probably due partly to the summer weather. Steve Morris reminded members that the state will pay for travel if it is more than sixty miles from home.

Next Meeting-July 9th at Honeywell Center-Wabash, Indiana

MEETING ADJOURNED